

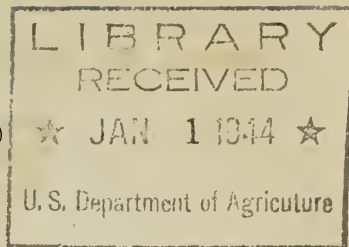
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDIES OF CONSUMER REACTION TO
GRADE-LABELED CANNED FOODS



PURPOSE

The objective of these studies is to ascertain the reaction of consumers to:

A-B-C Grade-labeled products. These products are labeled Grade A, Grade B, or Grade C, in accordance with U. S. Standards, and the canner or distributor is responsible for the grade claimed on the label.

U. S. A-B-C Grade-labeled products. These products are packed under continuous factory inspection - an experiment now being conducted by the Agricultural Marketing Service. They are identified by the prefix "U. S." before the grade statement - U. S. Grade A, U. S. Grade B, or U. S. Grade C - in addition to the statement "Packed under continuous inspection of the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture."

These suggested studies are intended to include both types of grade labeling, depending upon the merchandise available in the locality in which a study is undertaken and the wishes of an interested group.

A study should be conducted objectively without effort to influence the customer's opinion.

The details of local studies of consumer reaction to grade-labeled canned foods are left flexible so that the study may be adapted to local market conditions, available personnel, and the educational objectives of the interested group.

As soon as an interested group has decided to participate in a study, they may notify the Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and request helpful material for use in arranging the study. The material supplied can be used to familiarize interested groups with grades for canned fruits and vegetables, grade labeling, and the continuous factory inspection experiment.

PARTICIPANTS

Under the guidance of some individual, such as a home demonstration agent, club leader, home economics teacher, marketing specialist, or other qualified

person, the following might participate in a local study:

- Home Demonstration Clubs
- Homemakers
- Classes in home economics, food consumption,
consumer education, or marketing
- Parent-Teachers' Associations
- Graduate students
- Department of a college or university
- Study clubs interested in consumer problems

TYPES OF STUDIES

Retail Store Study

Through cooperation with a retail store, members of an interested group may wish to carry on one or more of the following activities in the store:

- Explain the details of the Agricultural Marketing Service
continuous factory inspection experiment

- Answer questions that customers voluntarily ask concerning
grade-labeled products

- Cooperate with the store manager in arranging an exhibit of
grade-labeled canned products and observe customers' re-
actions and interest in it

- Conduct personal interviews with store customers and record
interesting consumer comment

- Distribute questionnaires or ballots designed to reflect
consumer opinion on questions in which the local group is
particularly interested

- Compile data of sales of grade-labeled canned foods

Plans for the study as drawn up by the interested group will depend upon:

- How many A-B-C grade-labeled or U. S. A-B-C grade-labeled canned foods are
available locally and whether or not Grade B and Grade C foods as well as
Grade A foods are available?

- If the store manager has difficulty in obtaining U. S. grade-labeled
canned foods, the Agricultural Marketing Service, on special re-
quest, may be able to offer suggestions as to how this merchandise
may be obtained.

What kind and how many stores shall be invited to cooperate in the study?

Several stores located in communities of different economic levels will usually provide the best results, but large stores serving various income groups present excellent study possibilities. Even small stores in a community will furnish valuable and varied consumer contacts.

What kind of displays or activities will be best suited for the store selected?

Arrangements should be made with store managers for proper display of grade-labeled canned foods. Displays may feature two or three canned foods during successive periods of one or two weeks. The commodities may be arranged in special displays or in their regular locations. Displays should include grade-labeled and non-grade-labeled products of similar price and should be marked with display material to attract consumer attention.

Consider with the store managers the possibilities of a "Grade-Labeled Canned Foods Month" featuring these products.

Make arrangements with the manager to permit representatives of the group to carry on various activities in the store.

Educational Studies

An educational program to interest consumers in grade-labeled products may be carried on by any group that wishes to do so. The group leader or other qualified person may familiarize the members of the group with all phases of the continuous factory inspection experiment of the Agricultural Marketing Service and with the U. S. Standards for grades of canned foods.

Radio skits, radio interviews with homemakers, and newspaper articles may be used in connection with such a program.

Comparative quality studies could be made by having members of a group purchase several brands of grade-labeled and non-grade-labeled canned foods at corresponding prices. Samples opened at group meetings could be examined and, with the aid of Agricultural Marketing Service score sheets, could be checked for the factors specified in the U. S. Standards. Copies of U. S. Standards and score sheets may be obtained without charge upon request to the Agricultural Marketing Service, Washington, D. C.

After a group has become familiar with the U. S. Standards, grade-labeling, and continuous factory inspection experiment, a poll might be taken to learn:

How many women in the group have tried A-B-C grade-labeled products
How many women who used these products found them satisfactory

How many women in the group have tried U. S. A-B-C grade-labeled products
How many women who used these products found them satisfactory
How many have asked their grocers for A-B-C grade-labeled or U. S. A-B-C grade-labeled products
How many stores have stocked these products since the study began
How many women recommend the continuance of factory inspection by the Agricultural Marketing Service

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF A STUDY

Newspaper, radio, and other announcements of the study may be arranged. The extent and timing of these releases will depend upon the manner in which the study is to be conducted, when it is to take place, and the results of the study.

SUMMARY OF A STUDY

After the studies have been completed, a summary may be made of consumer reaction and of sales of grade-labeled canned foods as furnished by the retail stores. A compilation of personal interviews and consumers' comments will form the basis for interesting narrative reports. Factual data may be reported through local newspapers, club magazines, radio programs, or other channels.

The Agricultural Marketing Service will appreciate receiving a copy of a group's report and a summary of data compiled.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW SHEET

(This is a suggested interview sheet. It may be revised by the leader of the interested group.)

What did the customer say was the most important consideration in the selection of canned foods when price is equal?

(Check One)

- ☐ Brand
- ☐ Grade on the label
- ☐ Other information on the label
- ☐ Previous personal experience
- ☐ Recommendation of sales person
- ☐ Recommendation of a friend
- ☐ Other

What was the reaction of the customer to an explanation of U. S. A-B-C grade-labeling of canned foods?

	Check	Apparent Reasons
Was she very interested?	_____	_____
Was she slightly interested?	_____	_____
Was she indifferent?	_____	_____
Was she opposed?	_____	_____

What was the reaction of the customer to an explanation of continuous factory inspection by the Agricultural Marketing Service?

	Check	Apparent Reasons
Was she very interested?	_____	_____
Was she slightly interested?	_____	_____
Was she indifferent?	_____	_____
Was she opposed?	_____	_____

What was the reaction of the customer to the A-B-C grade-labeled or U. S. A-B-C grade-labeled commodities she had previously purchased and used?

	Product	Was she well satisfied?	Was she reasonably satisfied?	Was she dissatisfied?	What were her comments?
U. S. Grade A	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grade A	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grade A	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
U. S. Grade B	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grade B	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grade B	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
U. S. Grade C	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grade C	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grade C	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

